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NSC BRIEFING

20 MARCH 1956

BACKGROUND--MOROCCO

- I. Ahmed Balafrej, secretary general of Istiqlal party, expects cease-fire by Moroccan rebels by 26 March. States that 2 March declaration of Moroccan "independence" makes further resistance necessary.
- A. Rebels, however, unlikely to turn in weapons; thus will be available for another call to rebellion or to aid Algerians.
- B. Many rebels said to want to enlist in Moroccan army, now matter of negotiation in Rabat. Believed that Gen. Kettani ben Hamou, only Moroccan general officer, will command it and that cadre will be composed of about 100 Moroccan officers.
- C. 

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- II. Moroccan Istiqlal leaders held rump session 17 March in Tangier:
- A. Officiated at merger of Spanish zone Islah party with Istiqlal--a tactical move to intensify pressure on Spain to meet nationalist demands for unification of Morocco.
- B. Second reason said to be to reconcile divergent views of extremist Allal el-Fassi (who had remained in exile in Cairo, but recently conferred with Spanish officials in Madrid, making "triumphal return" to Tangier on 17 March) with more moderate views of Istiqlal executive committee and sultan.

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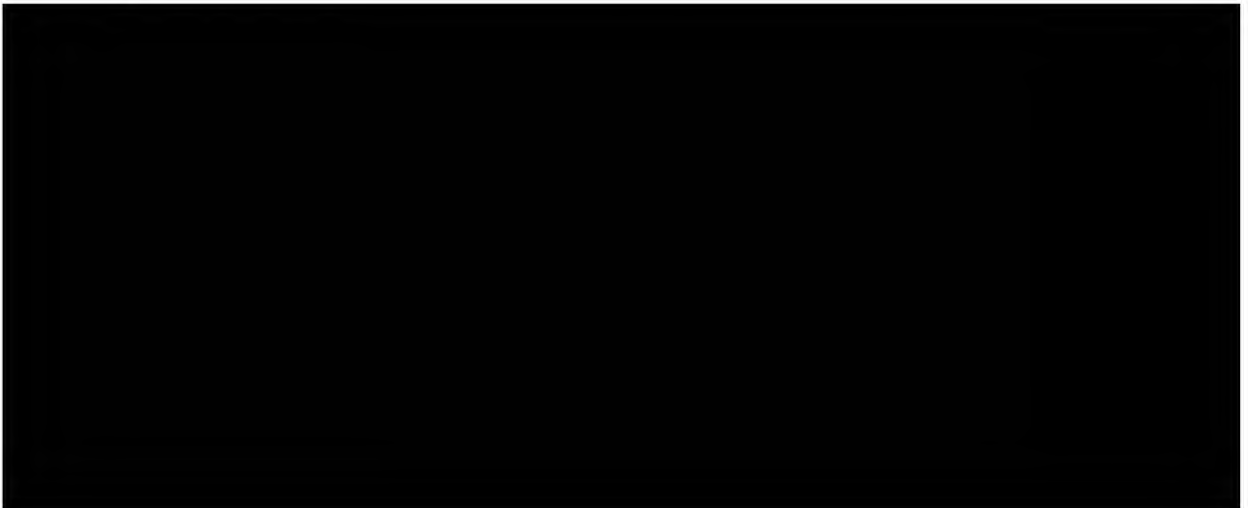
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1. El Fassi recently told press that Morocco
 - a. will join UN and Arab League this year
 - b. does not recognize US base agreements (but modified this statement on 17 March in another press interview.
2. Balafrej denies serious discord with El-Fassi and declares that no decision made for Arab League affiliation, Has given every indication of preferring Western Orientation.

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